NCA
VOC FOR IOP/FN
NEWS ANALYSIS 1-1550 OCTOBER 1, 1976
JOHN BUE/PARIS

FRENCH POLITICAL PUZZLE

ANNCR:

FRENCH POLITICAL OBSERVERS ARE WONDERING WHAT EFFECT FRANCE'S ECONOMIC RECOVERY PLAN WILL HAVE ON THE COUNTRY'S POLITICAL FUTURE. FROM PARIS, VOA CORRESPONDENT JOHN BUE HAS THESE OBSERVATIONS.

VOICE:

IN A TELEVISION ADDRESS, THIS WEEK (9/29), PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING SAID THE ECONOMIC EMERGENCY WHICH FRANCE IS TRYING TO COUNTER WITH ITS NEW ANTI-INFLATION PLAN REQUIRES A NATIONAL EFFORT. "LET US AVOID ALL THAT DIVIDES," HE SAID, "LET US NOT POUR INVECTIVE UPON EACH OTHER. LET US RALLY THOSE WHO KNOW DEEP DOWN DESPITE THE DIVERSITY OF THEIR POLITICAL VIEWS THAT THIS IS A QUESTION OF NATIONAL INTEREST."

PERHAPS THIS WISE COUNSEL WILL BE HEEDED IN THE LONG RUN BY THOSE MAINLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE NATION'S ECONOMY. THE PRESIDENT HAS GIVEN HIS ECONOMIST PREMIER RAYMOND BARRE UNTIL THE END OF NEXT YEAR TO PUT THE PLAN FULLY INTO EFFECT.

BUT AS OF NOW, THE POLITICAL PARTIES IN FRANCE ARE NOT FOLLOWING THE PRESIDENT'S ADVICE. THE LEFT IS DERIDING THE PLAN AS INSUFFICIENT AND UNFAIR. THE TWO MAIN LABOR UNIONS HAVE CALLED A ONE-DAY PROTEST STRIKE EARLY IN OCTOBER. ALL THIS WAS EXPECTED AND DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN THE UNIONS WILL TAKE ANY DRASTIC MEASURES SUCH AS PROLONGED STRIKES LIKELY TO FURTHER DAMAGE THE ECONOMY.

ALSO TO BE EXPECTED, BUT PERHAPS POTENTIALLY MORE DAMAGING TO THE PRESIDENT, ARE FORCES WITHIN THE POWERFUL GAULLIST PARTY -- A MEMBER OF THE GOVERNMENT COALITION -- WORKING AGAINST THE

PRESIDENT'S CALL FOR NON-PARTISANSHIP IN COPING WITH THE ECONOMIC EMERGENCY. FORMER PREMIER JACQUES CHIRAC, WHO RESIGNED LAST MONTH BECAUSE HE DISAGREES WITH THE PRESIDENT, IS CALLING UPON THE GAULLISTS TO MODERNIZE THEMSELVES. HE WANTS THEM TO START IMMEDIATELY AN AGRESSIVE CAMPAIGN TO AVERT A POSSIBLE VICTORY BY THE LEFT IN PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS TO BE HELD WITHIN EIGHTEEN MONTHS.

THE COMING YEAR WILL REVEAL THE RESPECTIVE STRENGTHS OF THE PRESIDENT'S NON-PARTISAN APPROACH AND THE CONFRONTATIONAL ONE ADVOCATED BY THE LEFT AND BY MISTER CHIRAC. AT THIS STAGE, THE ONLY CERTAINTY SEEMS TO BE THAT IF THE GOVERNMENT'S ECONOMIC PLAN FAILS, THE COMMUNIST-SOCIALIST ALLIANCE'S CHANCES OF WINNING A MAJORITY IN PARLIAMENT EIGHTEEN MONTHS HENCE WILL BE GREATLY IMPROVED.

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